

In agreement on Newark detractors

DEAR EDITOR:

I agree 100 percent with the opinion expressed by Delores Rich (Newark This Week: Oct. 4) and applaud her for speaking the truth about outsiders who make negative comments about Newark.

As a lifelong resident of Newark by choice, I am also fed up with the derogatory and sarcastic remarks that I hear almost on a daily basis, remarks such as "How can anybody in their right mind live in Newark?" or "I don't think anyone with a mind lives there."

These remarks were made by two residents of Metuchen waiting for a train in Penn Station. I would like to know why anyone in his or her right mind travels to a city that they despise so much every day. Why not stay in their suburban enclaves to work and stop draining the city of resources that could go to people like myself who cannot even get an application for a job, not to mention a job itself?

I love Newark and always will love Newark. Like all the other residents I know, I will never give up on it.

Robert Cross,
Newark

Setting the record straight

DEAR EDITOR:

In response to a recent letter by John Lynskey regarding Columbus Homes, let me clear up some of his misinformation and address his misguided accusations.

There has been no demolition started at Columbus Homes because of the inability of the Newark Housing Authority to start building the required replacement housing. The requirement for such housing is not based on a "premise," as Mr. Lynskey claims, but rather on a federal law signed in 1988 by President Ronald Reagan.

The law is the guiding principle here, Mr. Lynskey, not your or anyone else's point of view.

The housing authority has not met construction schedules that it set back in 1989 following an agreement reached with the Newark Coalition for Low Income Housing, which had sued the authority. At that time, the authority said that it would start construction on the required 465 units in late 1990 and early 1991. The fact is the authority did not start construction until early 1993 and has not yet started on 194 units of the 465.

This may occur by 1993. Once the contractor is given approval to begin the construction of these units, the authority can start with the demolition of Columbus Homes.

If you were so concerned about the lack of progress, Mr. Lynskey, you should have pressured the housing authority to meet its obligations sooner. Because you never took time to understand the true facts, you continue to direct your concerns to the wrong party.

You also imply that low-income housing may not be needed because of the decline in Newark's population.

Nothing could be further from the truth. In the past year when the housing authority opened its waiting list, over 9,000 applications were distributed. In addition, there are still many homeless families in the city and others will be in danger of becoming homeless when the state housing assistance ends in the near future.

Mr. Lynskey, just because you may have a home that is affordable, you have no right to stop others from having that same opportunity. There are people in our city who need public housing and it is due to the Newark Coalition

for Low Income Housing that action was finally taken.

You suggest that there are families who have considered living or working in the city but have been "turned off by the sight of these buildings" as they drive on Route 280. Let's be real. I think families are more concerned about job opportunities, schools, housing availability and safety issues other than Columbus Homes.

If you do know of someone who feels this way, I urge them to skip Route 280 and drive along Irvine Turner Boulevard or Avon Avenue or Gouverneur Street to see the new public housing construction that is taking place. This is progress of which we can all be proud.

These new units represent improvements in the quality of life in our city for which we are striving.

Finally, Mr. Lynskey, you took a low blow in resorting to name calling. Many decent and hardworking people continue to stand together under tremendous pressures to fight for public housing. There is no personal gain here but rather a commitment to protecting and producing safe, decent and affordable housing for all Newarkers.

Your reactionary comment was an insult to these tireless advocates and will only serve to divide rather than unite the people of our city. The time now is to come together and build an unprecedented 1,777 new units of public housing that will bring stability to hundreds of families who will finally have a place to call home.

Vic De Luca,
Chairman,

Newark Coalition for Low Income Housing

Somalia: Another lost cause

DEAR EDITOR:

We went to Somalia with good intentions. We went to help a starving people and a country that was calling out for help.

Help them we did, with good care and medical aid for several months now. Our reward: Convoys with food and supplies ambushed, and soldiers attacked, killed and taken as prisoners. Somalian guerrillas captured our supplies and learned quickly how to make a profit in the "black market."

The most recent episode was the killing and brutal mutilation of two of our servicemen, Spec. 4 Dominick Pilla and Cpl. James E. Smith. To fight and die for a noble cause is one thing, but to be butchered like animals and then put on display is an outrage and disgrace.

How many more of our men will be sacrificed by President Clinton? Once again the United States is somewhere where it should not be and is not wanted. Does Vietnam ring a bell?

We now have approximately 4,700 troops in Somalia. President Clinton wants to send another 700 and more tanks. He believes that will work.

President John F. Kennedy believed the same thing in 1962 when he increased the troop strength in Vietnam from 600 to 17,000 men. Five years later, the United States had over 500,000 men fighting for another lost cause. I know because I was there.

After 12 years of war, 58,000 dead and another 2,400 missing in action, we bowed our heads and were chased out of Vietnam by the Viet Cong. We don't want and need another Vietnam. We haven't forgotten it yet! Let Somalia take care of Somalia.

Nicholas Cerreto,
Newark